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VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB

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VACAVILLE, CALIFORNIA

May 2012

President's Message-The Feedline

By Marcus Maclean, KI6WDX

When will it start warming up instead of the cold dreary days thus far?

Well, here it is with spring now in the full bloom and soon, the summer heat will be upon us all and now might be a good time to check all of those important antenna cable connections and inspect the coax cable to make sure that a problem doesn't come up later when the "heat of the summer" is in full swing and getting up onto the hot roof or climbing the tower is totally out of the question because the hot metal is too much for the gloves! Put up that new antenna now while it's still relatively cool outside. And better yet, take some time to hose out the A/C unit that sits outside before the weather turns ugly hot!! It's a simple task that will go a long ways in making sure your shack will stay cool when it's darn hot outside!

I want to thank those club members who volunteered with this year's M.O.D. event over at the Pena Adobe Park. But before next year's event (or any upcoming event our club participates in), both myself and Chris, KD7TQO will be looking at a good viable and doable way to enhance the radio communications so that all members involved have a solid signal between everyone including the Net Control operator. In other news, I've already secured the BBQ pits at the firehouse for next month's end-of-the-year club informal meeting which was well liked last year by those attending members and their XYL's or guests. Just bring what main dish you'll want to cook and the rest is pot luck which I think is good for everyone. Why sit inside of a stuffy restaurant eating "fast food" when the weather is just right for a nice BBQ?!

Once again, I rarely hear other hams using our club repeater and is the "why" have anything to do with not having a worthy antenna mounted at your shack? There are plenty of ways to build yourself a homemade antenna be it with copper wire or copper tubing from places like ACE Hardware, Lowe's or Home Depot. Don't know how to solder using soft solder like plumbers use? I can probably help those members who need some instruction as I work with the stuff on a regular basis. Or are you not too sure about how to go about putting up a worthy wire antenna? Again, all you have to do is just ask and don't be embarrassed about your lack of knowledge. Sure, buying those pre-made factory antenna models is nice, but they are also expensive especially so in this rough economy. If you truly want to G.O.T.A, all you have to do is just ask for some help. Of course, you'll have to buy the materials because I'm not in the mood to donate money for materials unless it's for my shack's operation. If all you have is an HT radio, with a little worthwhile materials and some instruction, you can be O.T.A in no time!

In the coming weeks, there will be some changes to the weekly net meetings, so be prepared in advance when the changes take effect. Also, our beloved webmaster (Bob, K6HEW) is looking for some worthwhile photos to post on the club's website. I'll be submitting a few myself in the next week and I encourage others to do this as well. The more our club website has to show, the better it will be for all that visit it! At this month's club meeting, I will be bringing up some novel ideas that I'd like our club officers and directors to consider because one involves increasing our club membership and increasing its public visibility both of which have lasting impacts over the long term. I attended the V.O.M.A.R.C. event in Sonoma on April 28th and I was disappointed in not being able to see how their Fox Hunt event was put on because that is an event I would like our club to put on. So, I'm talking with another ham who works at one of my suppliers who knows of one of his club members with experience in putting together and putting on a Fox Hunt event.

And I've got a couple of other nifty ideas to help increase excitement in our club that will go a long ways to increasing our overall image to others! Remember that next month is the annual ARRL Field Day yearly event and with it, I've got a few ideas about it that I'm sure can be realized without much effort for the good of all. What is on my mind about this yearly event most likely won't happen or go into effect this year. But they are worthwhile ideas nonetheless.

Well, time to close for now!! Until next month, be safe, be well and G.O.T.A.! 73!

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April Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by club president Marcus Maclean KI6WDX at 7:15pm. The March minutes were approved and the financial report was submitted and approved.

Old Business: None

New Business:

A motion was made to add the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of the general meeting. Discussion ensued about it but with no objections. The motion was approved.

The Net Control Operator schedule is current and full. It was noted that the vice president Chris Jones KD7TQO was instrumental in getting that item under control.

Discussion and sign ups for the March of Dimes event were discussed. The event took place Saturday, April 21 at Pena Adobe Park.

The June meeting will be a barbeque at the first house in the picnic area. Details will follow at the May meeting. We do know the meeting will start at 5pm so we can heat up the coals.

The Valley of the Moon Hamfest in Sonoma took place on Saturday, April 28. Several members were planning on attending the event.

There was discussion about moving the net back to 7:00pm from 8:00pm. In addition, a round table discussion format could be added to the normal check in process. The change will take place in September.

The $23 50/50 raffle was won by Bob K6HEW. Congratulations!

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB—2011
ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Marcus Maclean KI6WDX
Vice President: Chris Jones, KD7TQO
Secretary: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Treasurer: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Director: Skip Lawson, AF6HC
Director: Richard Craig, KJ6MIB
Director: Antonio Del Rio, N6ZGB
Director: Tom Christman KE6MDM

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Net Control Chairperson: Marcus Maclean KI6WDX
Activities Chairperson: Board of Directors
Newsletter Editor: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Newsletter Publisher & Distributor: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

After the break Marcus Maclean KI6WDX presented how to work LEO (low earth orbit) amateur satellites, the equipment he uses, and the websites he accesses for information regarding the passes overhead. There was plenty of back and forth commentary during and after the presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24pm.

Around the Shack

By Jerry Olive, KD6WKY

Now that I have 2m/70cm capability in my car, I've been on the radio a bit more on the local repeaters. When I only used a base station set up I would have my two meter radio on whenever I was on my desk top computer and/or HF radio working DX. It's been a while since I've had a mobile radio in a car on a regular basis; the last time was about 2008 or so. Things have changed around here on the local repeaters.

I've observed that the K6MVR repeater on 147.000 MHz is busy from morning til night with a few local guys talking about everything from Apples to Xanex; I have not heard them talk about Zebras. Sometimes I find it interesting, other times I wonder… Regardless, that machine is on all day long.

The W6VVR club repeater 145.470 MHz seems pretty quiet most of the time. I put out a call every time I'm in the car but rarely get a response. I have heard some activity during afternoon drive time a few times. I just wonder if more club members had mobile radios going would our repeater be a bit more active?

My mobile rig is a Kenwood TM-G707A that is installed with the transceiver in the trunk with the display, microphone, and speaker remoted to the front of the car; with a Larson NMO mount trunk lid antenna…it's a thing of beauty! The display is mounted on a LIDO LM-700 mount to the very left side of the dashboard against the little tiny triangle window between the front window and my door window. It is completely out of the way yet visible as a heads up display while driving.

I have been very fortunate to work a couple of new countries this month. A DXpedition over to Spratly Island located in the South China Sea, call sign 9MØL. During the DXpedition I read that the Philippine Navy sent their largest ship, a former US Coast Guard cutter recommissioned to their navy over to Spratly Island as a saber rattling show of force to eight Chinese fishing vessels that were doing illegal fishing. China sent two surveillance ships and positioned them between the Philippine frigate and their fishermen. The stand off lasted several days. The whole story was in the *San Francisco Chronicle* at the same time as the DXpedition activity.

Over in Yemen there is another DXpedition going on right now, call sign 7O6T. I just checked their on-line log and I am in it on the 15 meter phone box. Yahoo! New country and the rarest new country I have ever worked in 20 years. Yemen is on the Top 100 list as number five. I thought I had worked them on 15 meter CW also, but that was sort of iffy, I call that an ESP contact. J The DXpedition is listed as being active until 15 May so I still have time.

The problem with Yemen and most countries around that area of the world is there are never any amateur radio stations on the air, the propagation even under good conditions to the west coast is poor, and Yemen is terrorist central so it isn't safe place to be. So far there has only been one evening that had propagation marginally usable over the past week from here to Yemen. The group is on an island off the coast of mainland Yemen. Socotra Island is a tiny island surrounded by the Indian Ocean. I still think it's not a safe place to be. Later this year another DXpedition is suppose to take place in Somalia, I think that one will be under the same conditions as listed above.

I made a weekend trip to the 2012 International DX Convention in Visalia a couple of weeks ago. I bumped into Tom N6AJR and several Northern California Contest Club friends during the weekend. I am glad to report that the Holiday Inn where the convention is held annually replaced their head chef with a new guy from some big hotel in Las Vegas. The food was much better and palatable. I have taken issue with their food for years.

I emailed ahead to see if I could bring my own wine and was told no, all beverages must be purchased at the hotel. When I got there I talk with and observed many people with their own wine. Next time I'll bring my own wine, regardless of what they say. It's easier to apologize than ask permission, right?

Armed Forces Day Crossband Test

SB SPCL @ ARL $ARLX003
ARLX003 Annual Armed Forces Day Crossband Test Scheduled for May 12

ZCZC AX03
QST de W1AW
Special Bulletin 3 ARLX003
>From ARRL Headquarters
Newington CT May 2, 2012
To all radio amateurs

SB SPCL ARL ARLX003
ARLX003 Annual Armed Forces Day Crossband Test Scheduled for May 12

The Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard are co-sponsoring the annual Military/Amateur Radio Crossband Communications Test in celebration of the 62nd anniversary of Armed Forces Day (AFD). Although the actual Armed Forces Day is celebrated on the third Saturday in May -- May 19 in 2012 -- the AFD Military/Amateur Crossband Communications Test will be conducted on May 12 to prevent conflict with the Dayton Hamvention, scheduled for May 18-20.

The annual celebration features traditional military-to-amateur crossband communications SSB voice and Morse code tests. These tests give Amateur Radio operators and short wave listeners an opportunity to demonstrate their individual technical skills and to receive recognition from the appropriate military radio station for their proven expertise. QSL cards will be provided to those stations making contact with the military stations.

Military-to-amateur crossband operations will take place on the dates and time in UTC on the frequencies listed for each station.
Voice contacts will include operations in single sideband voice (SSB). Some stations, depending on propagation and staffing, may not operate the entire period. Participating military stations will transmit on selected military MARS frequencies and listen for Amateur Radio stations in the amateur bands. The military station operator will announce the specific amateur band frequency being monitored. Duration of each voice contact should be limited to 1-2 minutes.

The schedules and frequencies of participating military stations can be found in PDF format on the web at, http://www.netcom.army.mil/MARS/docs/AMC_Test_2012.pdf.
NNNN
/EX

The Life of an Antenna

Submitted by Chris Jones KD7TQO

Life span of an antenna...one man's joking opinion:

Well, generally it depends on hours spent listening. The antenna converts electro-magnetic energy into electrical energy, which is basically electrons moving into your radio. There are only so many electrons in each inch of copper wire, so when they've been sent downstream into your radio, the wire will become "ionized" and deteriorate and probably fall down. This explains why, when you come home one day, your antenna is on the ground.

THE VVRC WELCOMES YOU

The Vaca Valley Radio Club has proudly served the Northern Solano County Area since 1988. We pride ourselves in providing a friendly place for radio amateurs to meet and improve their operating skills.

We participate in public service events throughout the year and are always ready to assist with communications during times of emergency.

Browse our website for more information about our club. If you have any questions please email us at w6vvr@w6vvr.net or call 707-448-5665 for assistance.

The Repeater is Published by the Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143, An ARRL Affiliated Club. Founded 1987, Chartered 1988 General Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM 420 Vine Street Fire Station.

Wheelchair accessible

Visit the Repeater online courtesy of Bob K6HEW at: vacavalleyradio.net

Club repeater in Vacaville:W6VVR 145.470 MHz(-) pl 127.3
The W6VVR net call is Tuesday evenings at 8pm on the club repeater. All are invited to participate in this weekly meeting on the air. 73!

Additional local repeaters
WV6F 224.2ØØ(-) PL 127.3Hz
WV6F 44Ø.Ø25(+) PL 127.3Hz

What happens to all those electrons, you ask. Well, they migrate into your radio and accumulate. In older tube radios, there was a "grid leak" resistor circuit which allowed the electrons to fall on the ground. Now you can't see them, but they're there. As more pile up, they slide into your back yard. Tube radios, because of the "grid leak" last a lot longer than solid state radios, which stop working when enough electrons have piled up inside to short it out.

Now those electrons in your back yard want to get back into the copper wire, so they "pull" the antenna down to be re-united with it. Since the antenna is high, and they're on the ground, this attraction is not strong, but on a windy day, the electrons get lifted from the ground towards the antenna, pulling it down again. The wind often brings in free electrons from your neighbor's homes (from TVs, etc), so there may be a lot of these things around. If too many electrons get lifted up all at once, they overload the antenna, causing a heat mark, or worse getting back into the radio.

Now this is why your antenna usually falls down on windy days. At least, that's how I understand it. You can extend the life of your antenna by disconnecting it from your radio when you're not listening. But overall, 500 to 1000 hours spent listening will do in a long wire antenna.

It a joke OK!!! 73!

Solar Eclipse Website

Submitted by Larry Hogue W6OMF

We have a near solar eclipse coming soon; about 85% in our area. Check out this website:

http://eclipse-maps.com/

Go to this website and look on the right had side for the date May 20, 2012. Click on that area of the web page for details. The Western United States will experience a high percentage of the eclipse beginning around lunch time.

Net Control Duties for Club Net

W6VVR 145.47 Net Lineup

Week 1	Lauren	K6LIV
Week 2	Jerry	KD6WKY
Week 3	Chris	KD7TQO
Week 4	Glenn	W6JLX
Week 5	Bob	K6HEW

Fake Radios on the Market

Submitted by Larry Hogue W6OMF

Reference website:

http://www.icom.co.jp/world/notice/index.html

Counterfeit products have become a serious concern for Icom. Icom continues to fight against counterfeits. Counterfeit products are hurting not only Icom's business, but also authorized dealers' and distributors', and above all, users are the number one victim. Counterfeit products are often sold at very low price, but of inferior quality and performance.
Using fake transceivers, battery packs and chargers may even cause safety problems including the risk of fire hazards.

Genuine Icom products should be purchased from Icom authorized dealers and distributors. Please be advised that Icom is not responsible, will not be liable for any damage or loss resulting from the use of counterfeit products and will not provide any technical support of counterfeit products.

Some time it is difficult to identify counterfeit products in the market because some of them look almost identical to genuine ICOM products.
This is to show physical characteristics of the counterfeit products that we have found. There may be more different types of counterfeit products in the market.

If you find a product that you may suspect is counterfeit, please report it to ICOM world support center
Thank you for your continuous support of ICOM products.

Logbook of The World Marks 50,000 Users

05/02/2012

On May 1, Dragan Pavlovic, YT3PDT, completed his registration process for Logbook of The World (**LoTW**), becoming the 50,000th person to take advantage of the ARRL's online QSL confirmation system. According to ARRL Membership and Volunteer Programs Manager Dave Patton, NN1N, there are more than 3500 individuals from outside the US in the process of obtaining a digital certificate, and more than 1800 individuals inside the US who have started the certificate process, but not yet finished. It is estimated that more than 60,000 people have tried LoTW since its inception in 2003.

Earlier this year, the ARRL and CQ Communications **announced** that the ARRL will provide support for CQ-sponsored operating awards by LoTW, beginning with the WPX Award. This project has **entered the beta testing phase** with a select group of hams and, barring any unforeseen circumstances, is on track to be launched to the Amateur Radio community later this month.

"Radio amateurs around the world consider LoTW to be the 'must have' awards and electronic confirmation system," Patton said. "We look forward to planned, long-sought improvements and simplification, and are gratified that so many people have helped the system grow and become more and more useful."

Editor's Note—I'm noticing lots of confirmations from three and four years ago. I suspect these are newly registered LoTW users submitting their entire logs for the first time and getting all the confirmations in the system.

Host a QSO with the ISS

04/25/2012

NASA is now accepting proposals from US schools, museums, science centers and community youth organizations to host an Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (**ARISS**) contact between November 1, 2012 and May 1, 2013. To maximize these radio contact opportunities, NASA is looking for organizations that will draw large numbers of participants and integrate the contact into a well-developed education plan. Proposals are due July 2, 2012.

Using Amateur Radio, students can ask astronauts questions about life in space and other space-related topics. Students fully engage in the ARISS contact by helping set up an Amateur Radio ground station at the school and then using that station to talk directly with a crew member on the International Space Station for approximately 10 minutes. ARISS has a network of mentors to help organizations obtain the technology required to host this exciting opportunity for your students.

Website details: http://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/teachingfromspace/students/ariss.html

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB, INC.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Please Print & Fill in Completely

Dues are delinquent January 1st

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
Street: _____
City: _____Zip: _____
Phone: (_____) _____-_____OK to Publish ?(_____)
License Class: _____ ARRL Member ?(_____)
E-Mail Address_____

FAMILY Member (Spouse or Children)

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)

MEMBER Dues --------- $20.00 _____
Each Family Member -- $ 2.00 _____
Student ---------- $ 5.00 _____
Repeater/Autopatch donation --- _____
Call/Name badge -------- $11.00 _____
Optional ARRL membership
ARRL dues ---------- $37.00 _____

Total ---------- _____
Paid by CASH: ____ Check #_____
DATE:_____

Mail to : Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143